THEA 325 ACTING FOR FILM Spring 2017
CRN 23780

COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Michael Cohn Office Hrs. Wed., 12-1pm
Office: Hamman Hall/Room 106 Class: Wed., 1-3:50pm
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DESCRIPTION:
This course teaches methods and techniques in acting for film, and will encompass the process of preparing for auditions, analyzing and assessing characters within a screenplay, preparing film roles, rehearsals, and film acting on set and location.

The instructor assumes students enrolled in Acting For Film have satisfactorily completed the prerequisite course(s), and thus have a basic familiarity with the teachings of Stanislavsky and his interpreters, as well as a solid understanding of how a dramatic text can be analyzed for character objectives, actions, and conflict. Course work will progress from in-class exercises to scenes.

OBJECTIVES:
For the student to fully understand and demonstrate:

- the process of analyzing both story and character within a screenplay. This includes such concepts as Objectives, Dramatic Beats, Character History, Backstory, Emotional and Situational Contexts, and more.
- the various methods and techniques which are useful and effective in preparing for a film role.
- basic strategies for audition preparation.
- the fundamentals of production set etiquette and the importance of adhering to professional standards.
- how to build both an acting resume and sample reel.

METHODS:

Reading assignments, informal lecture and class discussion; numerous individual and group exercises; scene work (inside and outside of class); written critiques of film roles; personal journal.

ASSIGNMENTS/REQUIREMENTS:

Auditions: This course will be integrated to the maximum extent possible with the filmmaking course at Rice (Film 328 Filmmaking I). Students in this class are therefore expected to audition for and be cast in specific roles for filmmaking projects.

	To that end, during the first few weeks of the semester at least one audition session will be arranged to gather students from both classes together (Date and time to be announced). In addition, we will schedule at least two "practice" auditions during our regular class meetings.
Scenes:	Will consist of scripted material performed (and recorded) within class, or outside of class as part of a short film project (refer to the above). Scene work will require extensive preparation and rehearsal both within and outside of class. In-class scenes are to be performed the day assigned. If you are sick or out of school you will be allowed to perform the assigned scene the day you return. If you are unprepared, you will receive a zero.
Scene/Character Analysis:	For each scene performed (whether for the Film class or within this class) you will complete and submit a Scene/Character Analysis (instructions to be provided and discussed).
Assigned Readings:	All readings are essential to the course and due according to the schedule outlined in the Course Calendar.
Journal:	You are required to maintain a journal about your experiences within and outside of class. Entries should be written at least twice per week (more on this in class).
Critiques:	Students will be assigned four brief critiques of specific roles within selected films (list to be provided). Viewing of the assigned films will take place outside of class at the students' convenience.
Ensemble:	Be open and committed to the work and to your classmates; this class is your company for the semester. Be willing to take risks.
Be prepared:	Have your journal and texts with you always.
Honor Code:	In order to pass the course, all requirements need to be fulfilled and students' work must be in accordance with the Rice Honor Code.

EVALUATION:

In-Class Participation*	20%
Auditions	10%
Journal	10%
Critiques of Film Roles	10%
Scene One	20%
Scene Two	30%

*Your contribution to discussions, question and answer, constructive critiques of your classmates, and in-class exercises and rehearsals, are essential to your success in the course, and are therefore weighted heavily in assessing your final grade. Repeated absences or habitual tardiness will negatively impact your grade and may very well make the difference between passing or failing the course.

Note: This course is designed to encourage exploration of imagination and emotion as an essential part of both preparation and performance. In evaluating your scene work I will consider the depth of your inquiry and exploration, commitment to the acting process, and evidence of substantial rehearsal and preparation outside of class. If you're unprepared your work will reflect as much and your grade will be adversely affected. Therefore your commitment to process will be valued above the "result" of your scene.

Numerical grades (0-100) will be given in each category and weighted according to the above percentages. The final grade will convert to a letter grade as follows:

98-100	A+	77-79	C+
94-98	A	74-76	C
90-93	A-	70-73	C-
87-89	B+	67-69	D+
84-86	B	64-66	D
80-83	B-	0-63	F

REQUIRED TEXT:

How To Stop Acting by Harold Guskin

You will be assigned two scenes, one or both of which may be from within the Film class (FILM 328). Depending on the success of the integration with the Film class, one of the scenes may be performed (and recorded) in this class and will be selected from stage plays and/or screenplays that you will be required to obtain. Both First and Second scenes may be excerpted from a stage play or screenplay of any nationality or time period, so long as you are able to secure a complete (and faithful) translation in English. More detailed information will be provided during class.

Readings from other texts will be provided periodically.

VIEWING OF FILMS:
In accordance with the schedule provided in the Course Calendar, each student will select and view four films from a list of feature-length movies, and write a brief critique of a particular role from each selected film.

CLASSROOM ATTIRE:
Sweat pants, jogging pants or bike shorts. No jeans, skirts, or dresses. No boots, heavy shoes or flip-flops—sneakers or bare feet are acceptable. All large jewelry must be removed before starting class. You must be dressed and ready to work at the time the class starts.

You may not take the first five minutes of class changing. IF YOU DO NOT COME DRESSED FOR CLASS YOU WILL SIT OUT RENDERING YOU A ZERO FOR PARTICIPATION FOR THE DAY.

CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE:
Please arrive fully prepared to participate. No eating, drinking (except water bottles) or chewing gum. You must not keep props in the studio. Check out procedure for costumes, large props, and set pieces will be in place.

All electronic devices must be turned off and put away for the duration of class (except during break periods). If I repeatedly ask you to turn off or put away your cell phone, I will treat the infraction as the equivalent of a missed class, and the Participation portion of your final grade will be penalized accordingly.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS OF THE CLASS:
At times you will be participating in some form of physical activity, some more strenuous than others. If you have specific health concerns that will hinder you from full participation, please come and speak to me. Students with disabilities who may need disability-related classroom accommodations are encouraged to make an appointment to speak with me as soon as possible. If you have a disability for which you are or may be requesting accommodations, please see the Disability Support Services in the Allen Center.

ATTENDANCE:
As this course is experiential in nature, attendance is crucial. Each student is allowed one excused absence per semester. Each subsequent absence will result in the student's grade being lowered by one-half letter. More than four absences will be grounds for a failing grade in the course. Missed coursework may be made up only at the discretion of the Instructor. Late arrivals after the first will count as an absence. A student arriving late to class will be barred from participation in any ongoing group exercise and must remain and observe until the completion of the exercise.

COURSE CALENDAR

Date	**In Class**	**Due on this Day**
1/11	Intro, Syllabus, Lecture, In-Class Exercises	
1/18	Practice Audition, In-Class Exercises	Assigning Monologues Textbook: Prologue through Page 27
1/25	Practice Audition 2	Textbook: Pages 28-71,
2/1	Lecture: Story & Character Elements Auditions Review	Textbook: Pages 72-95 Film Critique 1, Selection of Scene One
(2/2	*6:30pm Meeting of both Classes for Casting Film Projects)*	
2/8	Lecture: Set Etiquette & Rehearsals Scene One Preparation	Textbook: Pages 96-118 Character Summary
2/15	Scene One Preparation (rehearsal) *Casting for Film Class this week*	Textbook: Pages 119-150 Character – A Day in the Life
2/22	Scene One Preparation (rehearsal)	Film Critique 2 Dramatic Beat Sheet
3/1	Scene One Performance	Scene One (Round 1)
3/8	Scene One Performance *Casting for Film Class this week*	Scene One (Round 2) Selection of Scene 2
3/15	SPRING BREAK – NO CLASS	
3/22	Practice Audition (optional) Scene Two Preparation (rehearsal)	Character Summary Film Critique 3
3/29	Scene Two Preparation (rehearsal) On Set: Film Rehearsals	Character – A Day in the Life Dramatic Beat Sheet
4/5	Scene Two Performance	Scene Two (Round 1)
4/12	Scene Two Performance, Lecture: Sample Reels, Resumes, Head Shots	Scene Two (Round 2) Film Critique 4
4/19	Viewing Recorded Scenes	All Scenes Completed & Submitted

THE COURSE CALENDAR IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INSTRUCTOR.